



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Avian Health Program

P.O. Box 42577 • Olympia, Washington 98504-2577 • 360-902-1878 • [avhealth@agr.wa.gov](mailto:avhealth@agr.wa.gov)

## **MYCOPLASMA GALLISEPTICUM (MG): FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (MG)?**

*Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (MG) is an important contagious bacterial disease causing illness in chickens, turkeys, and game birds.

### **How is MG spread?**

The organism is transmitted during close contact with an infected bird, infected surfaces, fomites (inanimate objects carrying infectious organisms, such as boots, water bowls, etc.), and through eggs.

### **What are the signs of MG?**

Infected chickens usually develop respiratory signs including rales (clicking, rattling, or crackling lung noises heard during inhalation), coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, and shortness of breath. Turkeys are more susceptible to MG than chickens, commonly developing severe clinical signs including sinusitis, respiratory distress, depression, decreased feed intake, and weight loss. In game birds, MG is characterized by upper respiratory disease, weight loss, decreased egg production, and death.

### **How can I protect my birds from MG?**

#### **1. Keep your distance.**

- a. Restrict access to your poultry and your birds.
- b. Only let caretakers have access to your birds. Your caretakers should not attend bird shows or other events where birds are present.
- c. If you must have visitors, give them clean and disinfected footwear, booties, or insist they clean and disinfect their footwear before and after their visit.
- d. Game birds and migratory waterfowl should not have contact with poultry flocks.

#### **2. Keep it clean.**

- a. Keep a pair of shoes and a set of clothes to wear only around your birds.
- b. Remove mud, manure, etc. from footwear. Clean with soap and water, rinse well, then apply an effective disinfectant for the required contact time.
- c. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after handling each group of birds.
- d. Control flies, rodents, wildlife, and pets; reduce or eliminate their contact with your birds.

#### **3. Don't haul disease home.**

- a. If you travel to places where other birds or bird owners have been—even feed stores—clean and disinfect vehicle tires and other items that travelled with you.
- b. Quarantine new or show birds for at least 30 days. Designate separate clothing, footwear, equipment, and tools for quarantined birds. Care for the quarantined birds last and monitor their health closely.

**4. Don't borrow disease from your neighbor.**

- a. Don't share birds, equipment, tools, or poultry supplies with your neighbors or other bird owners.
- b. If you must borrow equipment, disinfect it before and after use.

**5. Know the warning signs of infectious bird disease.**

- a. Monitor your birds daily for signs of illness.
- b. Vaccinate against diseases of concern when possible or recommended.

**6. Report sick birds.**

- a. If your birds have signs of MG or any other illness, contact your private veterinarian or the Avian Health and Food Safety Laboratory (AHFSL) at 253-445-4544 for guidance regarding available diagnostics.
- b. If you observe a sudden increase in sick or dead birds in your flock, contact the state veterinarian's office at 360-902-1878 or call the Washington State Department of Agriculture's Avian Health Program at 800-606-3056.